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# ACHIEVEMENT: POEMS

BY

SAMUEL JAMES LEWIS  
AND HERBERT H. C. EVERETT



# ACHIEVEMENT

## A BOOK OF POEMS

...BY...

SAMUEL JAMES LEWIS

and

HERBERT H. C. EVERETT.

Sweet are the pleasures that to verse belong,  
And doubly sweet a brotherhood in song.—*Keats.*

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H. H. C. E.

to

P. M. M. F.



S. J. L.

to

J. S. P.





## Faith.

Love, you say that faith is brittle,  
And that yours is wearing thin;  
And you think I love too little,  
That I live a secret sin ?

O, I love you more than ever,—  
Still, despite my heart's command,  
You and I, my wife, may sever,—  
We cannot all understand.

But remember you once told me  
That true love is faith,—O love,  
Let your faith return, enfold me  
For our little one above.

## Alone.

I wait upon thy call, alone, alone,  
My Sweetheart, now that thou art gone!  
Nay, not again your passionate caress  
May teach me of the light of life  
For now thy memory is my life.  
The memory of that kiss,  
That last sweet touch of thee—  
It plays about my lips  
A taste that lingers thro' the gall of now.  
And O, your voice, that farewell at the gate—  
We did not know, my Sweet, 'twould be the  
last—  
With all the garden bowing low to you,  
The last sweet music that is gone.  
Now all is discord, all is tears.  
Do you remember in the garden that good-night?  
I turned about, as down the stony road  
I meditated on my homeward steps  
Tears swelling thro' my love and joy,  
For you had told me that our love was one;  
I asked my God what I had done thus to be  
given  
Such innocence to mar as thine,

Mar with my manhood's strength  
A flower so delicate that only love  
Of angels should enfold it.

God heard me then and pondered on my thought,  
Believed me right, and took thee to himself.—  
But O, 'tis hard, my God, 'tis hard!

Yea, I may now mourn o'er thy mound  
That lies midst the eternal colony of men,  
Beneath a stone, and near the stream  
That ever sings the dirge for all who rest there.  
And kneeling on the slab  
I shall be with you and shall plant  
A red, red rose upon your head, and ev'ry ev'n  
At dusk shall kiss its petals—they will be your  
lips,  
Your lips in death—and you shall talk, my Sweet,  
The soft tones heard to none but me.  
Then you shall teach me all the ways  
Of Heaven, so that I may fit myself  
To join you; and when God has seen  
That I am purged of earth,  
He will release me, free me from the chains,  
And I shall lie  
Beside you in the church yard near the stream.

Gone, gone !  
Can I believe it ? But I must, I must :  
God takes the pure and leaves the ill to cleanse—  
I shall be clean, soon, Sweetheart, soon,  
Then we may merge our spirits into one,  
And thou shalt sing the holy song of love  
Amid the angels, as you did of yore  
When the bright sunlight romped about your  
head,  
And honeysuckle loved to bend back from the  
porch  
Above you, listening, to drop down a kiss,  
The essence of its sweetness, in a pearl.  
And you would laugh, O, such a happy laugh  
When I walked thro' the dusk beneath the trees  
Up to the gate, and leap into my arms ;  
And I atremble feared to touch your lips  
Till you would pout me to it,  
And then the world would fade, and only thou  
wert there.  
But thou art gone, my love !—then pray thy God  
That I may wait not long ; not long  
The tides of being in me ebb ;  
And that soon may I join thee with the dead,  
Beside thee in the church yard near the stream,  
And with thy spirit in Heaven,  
For, Sweet, I am alone, alone.

## **Autumn's Flight.**

Keener odours linger now  
Upon the laden apple-bough  
Than when in summer's sunny prime  
The pink and white of flower-time  
Arrayed the tree in fragile glory:  
Ended is the summer-story.  
For with fulfillment of the year  
Departing Autumn seems to hear  
Thro' the darkening forest old,  
In the night-wind blowing cold,  
Sighing in the tree-tops sear,  
Moaning o'er the meadows drear,  
Sounds, her hour of parting knelling,  
Dimly mutt'ring, ever swelling;  
Sounds that herald Winter's coming:  
Reed-birds in the marshes drumming,  
Twitt'ring swallows southward flying,  
Brooks in murmurs dying.  
Faded now are summer flowers,  
Swifter move the ripening hours,

And new harmonies arise  
In the woodland fanes;  
Broad-arch'd with sunset-radiant skies,  
Cleansed by summer rains;  
And reaping-hook and sickle swing,  
Blithe maidens songs of harvest sing,  
And their sweet joyous melodies  
(Such songs as youthful laughter fills)  
Clear-borne upon the hearty breeze  
Deep among the darkening hills  
Die away in failing echoes;  
One parting glance she backward throws,  
A moment hovers on her wings:  
Then, as the wakening wind down-flings  
Dead leaf and wither'd rose,  
Rich Autumn whispers her farewell;  
And like the tones of some sweet bell  
Faint-flung from hoary mountain-side  
O'er a peaceful river,  
As echoes into silence glide,  
Dies away forever.

## The Vision.

The snow was falling thick and deep,  
The wide street pillow'd in white sleep,  
When thro' the silent night there came  
A hurrying form that stopped my breathing  
still;  
So like it was to thine, thy name  
Slid forth against my will.

Away fled thought of injury,  
My eager face leaned forth to thee  
With breathless trembling, and my heart  
Rushed to the lips and eyes with blinding tears;  
A word, a look-and far apart  
We were, despair knelled in my ears.

It was not thou; and since come fast  
And crowding, memories of the past:  
Aloft with thee I seem to float,  
Thy hand in mine, thy breast stirred with my  
sighs,  
The choking tears come in my throat,  
A crimson mist before my eyes.

And in my dreams I rise, start up,  
Stretch forth my hands to drain the cup  
Thy hands hold out, and wake to cry  
Upon thy name, and hunger for the peace  
Of silence for my agony  
And pray for swift release.

Ah! when shall after weary days,  
And drudging thro' long bitter ways,  
Thine eyes again shine full in mine,  
Thine arms again lock round me shy yet free?  
When taste again thy lips new wine,  
When com'st thou back to me?

## Christmas Day.

'Tis not the day, but 'tis the custom of it,  
Because it swings around each year  
A pendulum of joy, that we must love it  
And touch it on in its career.

And this grand, ancient clock of Christmas tide  
Was wound by faith of long ago,  
That yet will wind while hearts in joy abide,  
In what faith teaches them to know.

Hark to the strokes that come in cheery chime  
Bringing the heart an old refrain,  
Still gifting faith with an old, humble rhyme  
That echoes yet again, again!

## Illusion.

Her voice was used to sing to me,  
Like low-heard laughter ring to me,  
    As tho' from far-off hill-tops sang  
Sweet flights of chimes with anthems clear,  
    And thro' long sloping woodlands rang,  
Before the notes came to my ear.

But now her voice for ages long  
Is hushed to me, and still'd her song;  
    The thin-worn memory of it even  
Is slipping from me, so that I  
    As tho' a cry were still'd in heaven,  
Hear but lost echoes of a sigh.

Yet whiles, at blessed times, methinks  
Good spirits hear me, and there sinks  
    Upon me peace, so that I wait,  
Listening with attention strained,  
    A beggar kneeling at the gate  
Of Hope, that sees my wish attained.

For as I listen thus, the air  
Grows fresher, and the earth more fair;  
    The sighing swells, and down the wind  
From far unearthly bournes where she  
    Pines out her eyes (I wept mine blind),  
Come words of comfort down to me.

And thro' the valley floats her voice  
To bid her lover's heart rejoice;  
    Freshly bubbling laughter wells  
Like hidden water, and her art  
    Pours ghostly music thro' the dells  
And fills with singing my poor heart.

## Life.

I come from the dark and struggling lie  
In the cool of a Spring-like age,  
In the lap of the soft caressing eye  
Of a mother's heritage.

I out-grow the garment of Spring-time fast,  
And dash on a panting race,  
But Summer-heat covers me over at last,  
And I cannot keep the pace.

My life grows ripe on the Autumn wing,  
For I tuned my heart to Joy's;  
The harvested leaves become buds of the Spring,  
But the ghost of the Winter annoys.

I sit by the grate of a Winter fire,  
And soothe my soul with the flame;  
I see in the glow my funeral pyre—  
For soon I shall go whence I came.

## Evening.

Rose-red flushes up the western sky  
And lightly the first chill of night  
Strides o'er the meadow, and the earth-sounds  
die  
Slowly away, and grows the white-faced  
moon  
Half-hesitant, yet deepening with light  
That will be silver soon.

The stars flock fast from corners of the hills  
Arrayed in vapour-stuffs, and gems  
Of star-dust faint and pale, and slowly fills  
A silent host the cope majestical;  
Crowning their brows are shining diadems,  
And bright to lead them all

Hesperus, Prince, comes forth: now shadows  
close  
Gradually about; the dark  
Will soon be on; oh, that the night repose,  
The utter, very night of silence deep,  
Would fold me close about, as in an ark  
Of rest, that I might sleep.

That I might sleep forever, and the tears  
That spring for bitter want and wrong  
Be dried, and ever-new returning years  
Should with their varied harmonies give me  
peace;  
Sweet is the slumber, sweet and sound and  
long  
That sets the soul release.

The skies their evening labour have achieved,  
The star-batallions of the night  
Have filled their ranks, as when there once con-  
ceived  
In Bethlehem a woman, and abroad  
Annunciation flamed with song, and sight  
Of angels sent of God.

And He, that to the wounded gives surcease,  
This hour on land and water broods,  
And all earth's things await the word of peace,  
For over seas and forests, in dead reeds,  
Pipe but the Master's tunes, move but His  
moods;  
He hears me and He heeds.

## Hope.

She was one of the flowers of love,  
Delicate, lily fair;  
Soft as the breast of a dove  
And golden, her hair.

But drooping and dropping and past,  
With the leaving of Summer's rose,  
Her life fell away and at last  
Was laid to repose.

When the flowers once more came by,  
Remembrance sweetened my pain,  
And I saw in their coming that I  
Would see her again.

## Sonnet—Welcome.

I bid thee welcome, welcome to my arms;  
My heart leans toward thee, tender one of  
light,  
Yet would I doubly welcome all thy charms  
Could I but name thee what I haply might,  
But that the lurking dangers of this life  
Bid me refrain. I love and wait; in bliss  
Of tender paining hope my world-borne strife  
Is half-way healed by this embracing kiss;  
But not in full till I may sip thy lips  
In unrestraining joy, and in thine ear  
Whisper, my Love, to thee of the eclipse  
Of the frail world's gaudy and bright career,  
As I read in those steady eyes of thine  
That some day I may call thee wife and mine.

## Sonnet—To P.

Hast thou, my Love, the aching in thy breast  
I have in mine? It is a yearning pain  
Of passion when my heart to thine is lain—  
An ache which thy soft surgery can arrest  
When I may taste thy ripened sweets, caressed  
With love-light, when we are no longer twain,  
And love speaks silently that love shall reign  
The ruler of the kingdom of the blest.

O, Love, I feel that lingering throb to bring  
Thee toward me closer; thou art pressed to me  
By that close folding love to which time  
bears  
No dread of tears or ache; my heart will cling  
Thro' woe and joy in love I hold to thee—  
A love which falters not nor which time  
wears.

## Sonnet—The Language of Her Eyes.

Her heart is coloured with her love's desire,  
Till rosy radiance rises to her lips  
And fills her with an all-consuming fire  
That burns upon her cheek and sweetly slips  
Into her words—words flushing from her heart  
Like flowers from Nature's fulsome summer  
sent  
In floods of radiance; words that are but part  
Of that soft tongue of love's abandonment.

And yet she speaks not with her tongue; her  
voice  
Is in her eyes, and all their eloquence  
Of mute tones stirs her cheek to glow, rejoice,  
Her lids to fall in maiden innocence:  
The tongue may warp the truth, but from the  
eye  
The heart's own throbbing bursts, and may not  
lie.

## Sonnet—Danaë.

My Love, the fairest of the fold of few,  
Gives up her beauty of both heart and cheek  
To love's abandon, and yet ever new  
Are all the treasures that our love may seek ;  
The precious treasury of her rarest gift  
Is open ever to our love's each need,  
And still by some unfathomable thrift  
Is filled again to overflowing meed :  
For loving is an act of sacred cause  
That may not be a niggard of its hoard,  
'Tis governed by ungovernable laws  
That are the measure that it can afford :  
Use makes not love grow weak, but passing time  
Steadies the fitful furnace of love's prime.

## Passing.

The eyes of our Mother close slowly,  
    But glaze and are dead at last,  
And the part that was earth lies lowly,  
    And a part to God hath passed.

But because we were made of her blood,  
    And born into life thro' her pains,  
Of the best of her, most that is good  
    On earth with her children remains.

And the light that we do inherit  
    In trust for the unborn ones,  
Is a spark struck off from her spirit  
    To kindle the lamps of our sons.

## Requiem.

O'er them the stars their vigils keep  
And on their grave, where laurel wreathes,  
Soft shadows fall, and o'er their sleep  
Eternal music breathes.

A silver bark in heavenly seas  
The moon in evening glory rides ;  
While deep amid the forest trees  
A guardian spirit hides ;

And echo moans from distant leas,  
And o'er their mould, forever blest,  
Autumnal winds sigh harmonies  
In hymnal for their rest.

## **Forgotten.**

**Forgot me, my Love, for another?—**

Well, I only am overcast,  
I know what the heart cannot smother,  
The sting on the pride may last,  
But loving in me is now past.

I lived in a country of dreams, Love,  
'Twas a kingdom well fitted to own,  
But I've gone to a place that seems, love,  
With no queen upon its throne,  
A phantom of all I have known.

**Forgot me, my Love?—Well, no matter,**  
For the secret shall rest with me;  
'Tis I, only I, who now shatter  
The image I made of thee—  
And your martyrdom sets you free.

Forget me, my Love, for I left you,  
And let pass why I went, forget;  
For your own sake think I bereft you,  
And then with your eyelids wet  
Erase the moment we met.

Forget me in what is your new love,  
Aye, bind him with bonds that were mine,  
And may he be always your true love,  
A heart filled up with the wine  
Of a love new pressed from the vine.

## The Night-Watch.

The moon shines down on her sleep,  
And with broken silver paves  
A path in the lapping waves;  
And the ocean-sprites sing deep  
And sweet in their distant caves.

Lightly my loved one stirs,  
And about the wind-sprites veer,  
To chase away the fear,  
And strew her couch with myrrhs,  
Rare odours and balsams clear.

And the far-away low-hung star  
Set in the sky's rent veil,  
Shimmers in splendour pale,  
To beacon us home from afar  
And guide our wandering sail.

## The Poppy.

Ah! new, still ever new, still ever fair  
The face of beauty smiled upon the Earth  
In Summer's majesty, and soil o'er flowed  
In full maturity. 'Twas then I saw  
The languorous poppies nodding, deeply pinned  
In the soft golden hair of Earth, which, combed  
By the incessant winds, was looped in braids  
And lustrous woofs of red. Their brilliant hue  
Reflected on the light of day the darts  
Of heart-impassioned beauty. Flushing deep—  
Dressed in the warmth of love—allurements  
shone  
In each fold of their mantles; ev'n the seed  
That sleeping lay upon their bosoms breathed  
Forth languorous love, not spirit love,  
But in a deep desire that was unspoken  
Yet carried in a mist of unheard throats.  
And with the Earth who raised her summer face  
And drew to her soft-heaving bosom veiled  
With curls, the brightness of the Sun, they spoke  
In pleading eloquence: "O, Mother Earth,  
I know thy power, I feel it in my veins!"

Have mercy, thou who step'st so noiselessly  
Into the chariot day, and mercury-winged  
Thro' sunlight flashest, soon to reach the House  
Of Night where slumber patiently awaits  
To charm thee Letheward, and to wrap thee  
About with sable dusk clasped at the throat  
By the pale moon, and dripping with the stars;  
Have mercy; take me not to Night except  
Love dwelleth there! Have mercy!" But the  
Earth

Heard not; and as each evening fell she loosed  
The golden bands which sheaved her hair and  
went

Her way unto her quiet rest, and slept.  
And thro' the deep folds of the dusk bright eyes  
Fired by desire, streamed wide, unseen. Red eyes  
They were with weeping, flashing fitful rays  
That waned away into a steady glow.  
And then the dark Earth seemed a handed cup  
Of gloomy opiate whose starry crest  
Winked luringly to drain, which stealthily  
The Sun drank off with dawn-grey painful lips  
Leaving the day.

And still again, and yet  
Once more the dark loomed o'er the poppies'  
hopes;  
The half-faced moon sat stately in the dark

Above the ashes of the day ; and heat  
Slow-creeping lanquished all their limbs  
And stole in pain upon their hearts that mourned  
To one unseen complainingly : "O, hark !  
Deeply let me take in thy passionate gusts,  
And live the dreaming life of parted lips  
And hasty breath, O, symbol of my heart  
Whose orient bloom, yea, truly conquers me.  
I love the night but there love comes not; more,  
I love the day, but still I am alone ;  
None but my kind live with me ; I am starved  
Of love mid beauty ; bring my love to me,  
Or give thy breast of luscious sleep that I  
May breathe no more." Then silence fell on all ;  
Each eye drooped languorously and closed in  
death,  
And deepened darker hued ; the silent Earth  
Wept, drawing to a deep repose, but one  
Unseen went strangely by—Great Love his name.

## The Song in the Garden.

She is hid in the night and the roses,  
    Deep in the darkness sweet;  
And the light, quick tones of her song  
    Joyously, heedlessly fleet  
To the vault bright-studded with stars,  
    While the earth grows still at her feet.

And sadly she croons of a love  
    Inwoven, as all are, with pain;  
And the heart of the thicket mourns  
    Till her voice sings joy again;  
Lilting and turning in heavenly bournes  
    Then falling in pearly rain.

Then bubbling and gurgling like laughter,  
    The notes come in crystalline trills;  
Commingling and breaking and soaring high  
    Till the heart of the listener thrills;  
And the pent breath escapes in a choking sigh  
    And the eye with mistiness fills.

## A Capture.

Listen now, the music soars  
Many voiced, sweet and wild;  
Thro' the church's depths it pours,  
Hymn and choral, anthems mild,  
And from the murmur springing free  
A sudden tremor silvery  
Darts, a shower of throbbing sounds  
To the arches, waking echoes,  
From pier to vaulted dome rebounds,  
And into quiet goes.

So when we catch a noble thought  
And sing it to our inner mind,  
The words with precious meaning fraught  
Beat thro' Sense's portals blind;  
And in Emotion's brimming cells  
The bounding, circling music dwells;  
Rushing thro' the cloisters all  
Till the straying thought has gone  
Into our soul beyond recall  
And has become our own.

## Achievement.

The stroller in the thick-set wood  
A trill of low bird-music hears  
Gush out and die upon the breeze,  
And breathlessly about him peers  
To spy the songster in the trees,  
And waits the small throat's fuller flood;

Then feels a throb as suddenly  
The long cascades of rolling notes  
From out the leaf-recesses pour,  
And whence the searching music floats  
Before away the wild calls soar  
For one glad moment he can see.

So must he wait, that in the dark  
Of men's and women's souls would seek,  
And fearless go without a guide  
Or charm to make the stillness speak;  
No light for him till o'er the wide  
Expanse of dusk he see the spark.

A long breath drawn upon the sight,  
A setting of the teeth anew,  
And on that star that rides the sky  
As tho' from heaven itself it drew,  
Must he gaze steadfastly and high  
And pace the watchings of the night.

And after lapse of many hours  
And fighting off of heavy sleep,  
The star shall burst into full fire  
And for an instant so shall keep—  
Enough that brief flash to inspire  
The poet to divinest powers,

And key his being to the song  
And ripe the fruitage of his blood,  
And in short time to coin his thought  
To virgin gold, so that the flood  
Of men that pass, the song he wrought  
Shall hear with joy and listen long.

And so, as creep a violin's  
Strong human tones to greedy ears,  
From out a quiet curtained room  
To stir and soothe tumultuous tears  
And hold out comfort for the doom  
Of death, that final victory wins,

The words he forged with sighs and pains,  
With strong admixture of his blood,  
Shall for sweet hope and noble thought  
Gush ever in a steady flood,  
With pregnant seed and harvest fraught  
As pour Spring's vivifying rains.



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